

How to Grow Professionally

- Recruitment
- Onboarding Process
- Talents Retention
- Career Growth

Recruitment

The recruitment process of the CDO Office talents is managed by RISA. As the need of talents is raised in the Ministries, CDOs report to RISA of the need, which will be in charge of planning the recruitment and the allocation of the talent to the ministry.

Even if recruitment follows public sector guidelines in terms of recruitment, innovative recruitment processes should be put in place to take account of the specific nature of attracting talent in the IT field.

Attracting talents can be done through renewed recruitment strategies:

Attracting top tech talents is a crucial step to achieve a high level of digital maturity. The high-level of competition from tech firms and other high-paying private sector actors makes this task particularly hard. The Rwandan public administrations can pursue renewed recruitment strategies through different means:

- **Going where the talents are:** Many tech talents, such as university students with relevant tech degrees, are often unaware that the public sector is a viable option to develop their careers. Going where the talent is, by posting job adverts in the right channels (tech recruitment platforms) and by exploring partnerships with key actors (job fairs and school visits to technical universities) can be an important first step in cementing government as an option for tech talents.
- **Improving job descriptions:** Rigid hierarchies in the public sector can tend to translate to unclear job descriptions with blurry terms and skills requirements. Going beyond the traditional names of roles in government and being clearer about the day-to-day tasks and main challenges can make them more attractive for candidates. Please refer to the Note on Talent Management to see an example of a tech job description.
- **Through centralised recruitment teams:** Having a central recruitment team can be beneficial in providing a coherent approach to recruitment, once the necessary technical skills and the right profiles are identified. Such teams could provide a whole-of-government vision to design better recruitment strategies, offer advice on government branding, and have access to government reserve lists and various teams' recruitment needs. One way to achieve this could be hiring former tech company recruiters who know the language and culture associated with the sector.
- **Deploying faster and more skills-based recruitment processes:** Public administration can be notoriously slow at recruitment. Ensuring that the right candidates receive offers within a reasonable timeframe can ensure they are still available for the advertised positions. In addition, adopting a more "skills-based" rather than a "degree-based" approach to recruitment can help to:
 - Ensure that technical profiles have the necessary skills to perform the job, increasing accountability and efficiency
 - Make jobs more attractive for candidates, who would have a better idea of the tasks they would undertake

- Combat the existing bias in favour of higher education degrees, considering that technical skills such as coding, tend to be learned in more informal ways.

This can be achieved through different recruitment practices, such as:

- ◦ Showing the salary or the salary scale for the position
- Introducing technical skills tests or case studies in the recruitment process
- Involve future peers and other team-members in interviews
- Placing a greater emphasis on the technical skills rather than the educational background of candidates
- **Reducing bias in recruitment selection:** it is important to consider the diversity of the teams public administrations will hire. Better, more specialised recruitment teams will be able to help to avoid using language in job descriptions that will discourage women from applying to positions, and avoid other kinds of biases in recruitment. This can help public administrations look like the people they serve and make working there more attractive.

Onboarding Process

The onboarding process is crucial for integrating new IT team members in the public sector, as it ensures they quickly become productive and feel valued within the organisation.

Effective onboarding helps new employees understand their roles, organisational culture, and specific protocols, which is particularly important in the public sector where compliance and security are essential.

For an IT team, the process should start with a **comprehensive orientation that covers the RISA's mission, digital context and evolution in Rwanda, key digital policies, and an overview of the IT infrastructure.**

Providing a **detailed introduction to the tools, systems, and software** they will be using is essential. **Pairing new hires with mentors can facilitate smoother integration by offering guidance and support. Regular check-ins and feedback sessions during the first few months** can help address any concerns and adjust the onboarding process as needed.

In addition, accessible and actionable documentation on the CDO offices' organisations and common resources can be shared as part of the onboarding process.

Ritualize onboarding sessions with new recruits: for instance, every 3-6 month, organise a one-week program for new recruits to meet with key organisations and stakeholders linked to Rwanda's digital transformation, get familiar with digital transformation standards, and be integrated into the community.

Five levels of maturity of an onboarding process can be found in the Digital Maturity grid which are:

Levels	Statements
1	No formal onboarding process in place. The new hires are placed into their positions with no prior orientation. They learn as they go along their daily duties
2	Beginning of onboarding process in place, as the new hires are introduced to the colleagues, key contacts for administrative tasks are provided to the hires through a short welcome training (up to 1 day) where key information are provided to them but still without a real comprehensive onboarding process
3	Onboarding process is formalised, a detailed integration plan with clear objectives for the first few weeks and months are in place. Onboarding process is comprehensive with not only the welcome training, but a dedicated seminar for new hires each year (ex. intensive bootcamps to immerse new recruits in the company's culture and values). There is a pairing program (buddy, mentorship, etc.)

4	New hires are met before they start their contracts, they meet the future colleagues in company activities, organising friendly competitions to encourage learning and collaboration from the outset. Metrics and analytics are employed to measure effectiveness and the process is updated regularly based on the metrics measurement and organising regular feedback meetings with new recruits to discuss their progress and adjust the induction program if necessary.
5	Deployment of new technologies in the onboarding process such as: Using VR/AR for simulations and practical training, making it easier to learn specific procedures and tools, Use chatbots to answer new recruits' frequently asked questions and provide information in real time, Use of AI algorithms to personalise the onboarding experience according to recruits' profiles and needs.

Please refer to the onboarding process at RISA for more detailed information.

Talents Retention

Retaining talents in the public administration is key for institutional memory and efficiency

Similarly to talent attraction, various retention mechanisms can be put in place to ensure staff remain motivated with clear career paths to decrease turnover rates.

- **Remuneration:** One of the more difficult of mechanisms to deploy, given its inherent cost and rigidity, involves adjusting salary scales to make them more competitive vis-à-vis the tech sector.
- **General working conditions:** Public sector employment may be able to offer more work stability and better working conditions than the private sector in many areas, while also carrying a stronger sense of purpose by working for the common good. It is important to offer longer-term contracts and flexibility in working modalities. Some adjustments to consider regarding working conditions -which would impact the entire civil service, not just tech talents- could be:
 - Flexible work: ways of working that suit workers' needs, such as remote work allowed, flexible start and finish times, etc.
 - Ensuring high-quality hardware and work materials are available
 - Encouraging peer-learning, and collaborative work (see below)
 - Offer a stimulating working environment: for instance, shared offices at RISA building, facilities for staff to purchase material or infrastructures, meetings with inspirational actors of the tech ecosystem, ...
- **Career progression programs:** Once in the administration, the Government should have a clear career progression program for tech talents. This could include coaching for those talents who possess soft skills and who may want to aim for higher positions, opportunities for internal mobility (according to the staff's skills and interests), training opportunities (see below) and more comprehensive leadership programs. This involves high-level coordination to allow for internal mobility and to align the administration's strategic goals with the individual needs of tech talents.
- **Training and peer learning:** The tech sector in particular, with its ever-changing techniques, paradigms, and new technologies demands that staff remain trained and up-to-date with new trends. Therefore, public sector employment should include flexible training opportunities. This means, instead of providing a rigid menu of possible courses, to allow talents to choose their own courses, even if they are not offered by traditional public training centres. In addition, training and knowledge-sharing tends to be done informally through communities of practice (CoPs) and other interest groups. Setting up and encouraging CoPs within public sector teams is essential to foster a culture of collaboration and life-long learning.
- **Test new team organisations, project management and recruitment mechanisms**

- **Encourage experimentations and initiatives from staff:** inspired by the 10% program developed by the French AI teams in Etalab, a test of a similar format where talents can spend some time in exploratory projects, led in collaboration with colleagues or partners.
- **Explore inflexions in terms of project management and procurement mechanisms:** in order to mirror a possible objective to switch to product management methods, structure your teams according to products/services, as well as transforming calls for tenders towards service providers (instead of describing specifications with define functionalities, structure your tenders asking for agile methodologies).
- **Internal mobility programs:**

Digital Intervention Brigade: Brigade (similar to a squad) initiative assists ministries and public operators in developing and operating digital services following best practices. Comprising experts in areas like user research, design, accessibility, eco-responsibility, cloud, and digital transformation, it provides project co-financing, expert support, and team training. This multidisciplinary approach ensures that digital products are user-centric, accessible, sustainable, and innovative.

Programme 10%: 10% program initiative allows data science experts (or any other experts) to dedicate 10% of their time for inter-ministerial data science projects (or any other expertise). Its main features are:

- 20-30 people selected in different administration each year
- Collaborative work on projects answering common issues for all administrations. These projects are built as products (investigation, development, acceleration) and are all open source. Examples include:
 - creating a data visualisation tool
 - building data-anonymization
 - building AI models and datasets for specific uses in the administration

Enforcement to internalise the minimum part of projects: The initiative requires public agencies to **have an internalisation rate on projects of at least 20%** explained by the fact that externalised digital services cannot be done in detriment of the tech capacities of public administration. It urges public services to reinforce its capacities to avoid the potential risks of increasing externalisation of digital services.

As such, it considers that:

- If a digital project externalises its execution over 60% it is considered at risk. It should be closely monitored and an internal capable team should be hired to oversee it.
- If a digital project externalises its execution over 80% it cannot commence.

Career Growth

Career growth in the Digital field is a key topic. It concerns either the CDO/BA or the team members.

Regarding the CDOs/BAs

Here are several ideas that could be explored:

Steer CDOs/BAs as champions/exemplars of tech talents in the public sector: specific communications to describe the network, each CDO's history and past careers, skills and motivations to be in the public sector.

Open the possibility for CDOs/BAs to be “mobile”: for instance, after 3-5 years of service, make it possible for them either to change sectors, to work in the private sector or develop an entrepreneurial initiative.

Provide CDOs/BAs with training and learning options that could help them identify upskilling needs. For instance, one could want to take a managing position within a business department and build on the skills they develop as CDOs/BAs in other places in the public sector.

Explore the creation of leadership programs for high potentials: these could be inspired from what private companies often build for new recruits.

- Each year, a cohort of 10-15 people could be detected within CDO teams and proposed specific training, projects, and coaching in order to build career opportunities within governments.
- Another possibility would be to create recruiting program - similar to the French “Entrepreneurs d'intérêt général”, aiming at detecting tech talents within the private/startup sector and placing them in ministries to solve challenges (either linked to technology or based on a public policy challenge)
- This implies enhancing communications towards universities and startup communities

Develop a HR digital network: at RISA level, and in interaction with the Ministry of Public Service and Labor, build a 3 year roadmap to better structure HR for digital skills in the public sector. Among the foundations you could build: digital job description in the public sector (based on a skills assessment), rules on externalisation rate, remuneration scale (according to the job and year of experience), HR department at RISA, recruitment processes, training catalogue, ... This implies to train or recruit HR specialists to build these strategies and be points of contact for the digital network workforce.

Strengthen CDO teams compositions with essential profiles to manage digital transformation: Among missing (or insufficient) skills identified are data-scientists, AI experts, UX/UI designers, legal experts, product owners and managers, devops, digital and data policy managers.

Regarding the CDO (office) team

Build on the “**shared staff**” **mechanism** already in place, structure a team hosted at RISA level and deployable in sector projects when needed (expertise squad), resort to public procurement to mobilise expertise from service providers. Some specific needs for identified sectors can also be identified in parallel as cross-cutting resources.

Set a **Rotation program for the CDO (office) teams**: developers, IT help desk Officers and the other talents in the CDO teams can benefit from a rotation program managed by RISA in collaboration with the CDO Network structure.

Conduct annual interviews with each team member to understand his/her professional ambitions. Based on that, propose the needed training, task allocation and staffing that will allow the talent to grow and reach his/her ambition. There are two types of growth: the horizontal one and vertical one.

Horizontal growth of the CDO (office) Team:

To support horizontal growth within the CDO office, it's important to facilitate role transitions. For instance, an IT Help Desk Officer aspiring to become a Network Specialist should receive guidance and support. This process involves:

- **Advisory Support:** The responsible CDO should provide career advice and guidance on the transition.
- **Training Identification:** Specific training programs required for the new role should be identified.
- **Staffing and Task Allocation:** Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined to align with the desired position.
- **Mentorship:** Pairing the aspiring Network Specialist with an experienced professional in the field can be a crucial step.
- **Action Plan:** An action plan should be collaboratively developed with the talent to create an optimal growth environment, ensuring they have the resources and support needed to succeed.

Vertical Growth of the CDO Office Team:

Vertical growth focuses on enhancing expertise within the team. For example, a junior software developer should progress to a senior software developer over time. Achieving this involves:

- **Experience and Training:** Providing opportunities for gaining practical experience and targeted training programs.
- **Increased Responsibilities:** Gradually increasing the responsibilities assigned to the junior developer.
- **Exposure to Case Studies:** Offering real-world case studies and problem-solving scenarios.
- **Mentorship:** Ensuring that the junior developer is mentored by a senior talent, providing guidance and knowledge transfer.

By implementing these strategies, the CDO office can foster both horizontal and vertical growth, creating a dynamic and skilled team capable of meeting evolving challenges.

Whether for the CDO/BA or the members of his or her team, taking advantage of training is essential to improve career progression in public administration.

The training is managed by the RISA for all sectors. **The training catalogue designed by RISA is categorised into three distinct groups: Soft Skills, Technical Skills, and Sector-Specific Skills.** The strategic choice of training areas is reflective of the latest global trends in technology adoption across diverse sectors and industries, encompassing **pivotal domains such as cloud computing, big data, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity.**

In addition to the emphasis on technical proficiency, the plan acknowledges the significance of **complementary skill sets** crucial for personal development and self-management. These include **Critical and Analytical thinking, Design Thinking, Creativity and Innovation, leadership and social influence**, as well as **effective communication and technical writing**. Please refer to RISA to find out the comprehensive catalogue of training available.

However, there is a **clear imperative to enhance the training process.**

CDOs should have a training plan for their teams based on the needs of development of their talents. This training plan should be sent to RISA for consolidation at the beginning of the fiscal year (1st June) at the latest.

To draft this training plan, **key steps are provided below:**

1. Conduct training needs assessment of the CDO (office) team
2. Identify Gaps
3. Propose key training needed to fill the gaps
4. Define desired timeline for the training required
5. Structure the needs by priority
6. Propose alternative in case of unavailability of the training requested.

CDOs should collaborate with RISA in the purpose of raising funds for training. Every CDO must communicate the training needs to RISA on time and contribute if needed into the financial resource mobilisation.

CDOs must also ensure that, once the training slots have been communicated by RISA, all the talent takes part in the training. Follow-up is necessary to ensure that teams participate effectively.

Some **training should be designated as mandatory**, while **others can be optional** depending on the goals set by RISA and the sector in terms of IT talent development and competencies required.

During the annual interview (Minigo) conducted by the CDOs for their teams, training achievements, certifications earned should be assessed, as well as goals definition for the coming year in terms of training and required certifications.

RISA should conduct evaluation in collaboration with the responsible CDO for gauging the return on investment of the training initiatives.

The **assessment will be quantitative**, by evaluating the costs versus the benefits (money saved and earned), **as well as qualitative** (types of competencies gained, employee satisfaction and level of engagement in the work, employee confidence, leadership skills acquired etc...).

Collecting feedback from participants both before and after the training sessions is essential to improving their effectiveness.

Additionally, there is **a need to complement the training package with elective courses tailored for senior management, addressing specific competencies aligned with emerging trends**, team needs, and disruptive methodologies envisioned by the CDOs.

Innovative way of conducting training for the CDO teams:

A way to promote training is through communities of practice, such as **Blue Hats**, and **Betagouv**.